

Academia Exchange visit 7-11th March 2005

Diary of attendance

Joanna Greatwich (UK participant)

Day One , Monday 7th March

The participants met up at the NGCE centre in Dublin, for a welcome session, and introductions to the Irish Educational System, the Guidance System in Ireland, and discussion on the systems of advice and guidance in the respective countries represented.

The Advisers were:

Rosa and Jose Luis from Spain (both working in Secondary Schools);
Kari and Egil from Norway (advising on disability issues with adults and work, and as a Careers Adviser in a Job Centre);
Ulle and Kristi from Estonia (working in a rural primary school, and in a Secondary School);
Agneta from Sweden, working in a Further Education College;
Ilektra from Greece working in a Junior School;
Catherine and Carole from France, both working in Secondary Schools;
and *Iain and myself* from the UK- Iain as a Connexions manager and myself as an Adviser in a Further Education College.

The Irish Education System (presentation by Jane Beatty) prompted lots of questions around early leaving (ie students being able to leave school in Ireland at 14 in the past) and the newer trend in flexibility towards vocational areas for students who are not so academically focussed, and the optional “Transitional Year” in Secondary School, with its emphasis on practical experience to help students decide their next steps.

Exactly as in the UK there is pressure to increase the number of students from lower income families entering Higher Education. In Ireland the level at which a grant applies is considered by many to be too low a threshold, and student loans are less in the culture than in other countries - i.e. getting into debt as a young individual. The emergence of many Private Colleges which provide intensive re-take courses for the Leaving Certificate and also Higher Education courses- which are easier to get into than in the State System Universities, has caused an extra element of wealth/ class in education. The state system is largely considered to be of a higher academic standard by the people that use the state system and are perhaps not so privileged.

The concept of “Second Chance Education”, including Vocation training opportunities - VTOS ‘s (for all ages) and specialised and accessible “Youth Reach” courses for 16-19 year olds are becoming available to those who did not achieve in school and will enable them to achieve equivalent qualifications to the

School Leaving Certificate. Apprenticeships are, as in the UK very entry-competitive.

The Employment Service (FAS) also provides skills training for the unemployed such as for IT and return to education courses. Adult Education is largely paid for

Ireland has recognised that it has a big literacy problem, partly coming from the leaving school early culture, and previous lack of value given to education- e.g for those whose parents who left school early and worked in a trade or on the land all their lives. It also must be a main priority for government as Ireland need skilled and educated citizens in order to compete in a global, knowledge-based economy. The small boom in technology industry in Ireland was badly damaged by the subsequent fallout events after 9/11/2001 and the move to low cost global labour. The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) exists to address the high level of illiteracy and work with training providers to do this.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NGCE)

The next few talks on our hosts, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NGCE) and its activities showed us all how, as a relatively new system, the Guidance System in Ireland is cleanly interwoven within the current Unemployment Service, and Schools and Colleges (i.e working for the Department of Education and Science DFES and alongside the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.)

NGCE is an agency of the DFES and supports the individual deliverers of Guidance at all levels (although it is not funded for 3rd level) These deliverers may be Teachers in primary school or Counsellors/ Practitioners in other levels of education. As yet the majority of these practitioners will not have been fully trained via the Diploma in Guidance and Counselling, or the Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. Training levels are rising however.

The National Guidance Forum is the new group which brings together key players in guidance to consult, share good practice, develop terminology, and develop a quality and competency framework for guidance.

The NGF definition of Guidance that Ireland uses refers to guidance for all at any point in their lives, and its aims include benefiting the larger society. The main barrier to putting this fully into action would appear to be lack of guidance provision - e.g. for a College of 1000+ students (in practice this could be 3000) only 44 hours a week is guaranteed provision time for guidance. New initiatives such as the Guidance Enhancement Initiatives of 2000 and 2004 and the Curriculum programmes including work experience modules supplement this, but, as in the UK, it is simply not enough in Jane's opinion.

After lunch in a lovely old pub nearby we moved onto:

Comparison of Represented Countries- A Discussion

Counselling Element of a Guidance Practitioners Role:

One difference between the UK and Ireland/Europe (though not all the other Countries represented) was the counselling element of a Guidance worker's duties. For instance a Guidance practitioner in a School in Ireland and Norway would do emotional counselling as well as pure Careers Guidance, and so might fulfill both tasks with the same student. There is debate on this subject in Ireland, i.e. on whether they should be separate roles (as in the UK). Irish Guidance courses vary in their content of counselling training also.

My feeling on this was that this Practitioner/Counsellor role as it is must be at times highly stressful as it demands an emotional counselling mindset and then to change to a more practical and focussed Careers advice and guidance mindset - and/or a mixture of both in the same interview at times.

Training of Guidance Practitioners:

Most countries have a postgraduate 1 or 2 year Guidance Practitioner qualification.

In Estonia , you must have done higher education in Psychology or Pedagogy and have worked in a school for 3 years to apply for a Guidance post ; In France the Concours plus 2 years Psychology-based Guidance training are required, in Spain training in Psychology is needed- usually a degree; and in Sweden a postgraduate 1 or 2 year Diploma or a three year specialist Careers Guidance Degree can be studied (with only one years work experience as a requirement)

The Provision of post-primary Guidance in each Country:

France

In France there is a Counselling and careers provision from 11-15 in College and the Lices 15-18 for those on both Vocational and academic courses. All are given interviews if they are requested. Normal provision however is 1 Guidance worker for 2000-4000 students, which is often insufficient. For Adults who are unemployed an Australian organisation has been contracted by the government to deliver guidance and advice. There is no cross over with the training sector, which the French participants felt was a real weakness.

Estonia

In Estonia the role of School Psychologist and Carers Guidance Practitioner are usually separate , though one person may do both (another variation on the Counsellor/Careers Guidance role as in Ireland) Careers is a new Curriculum

area from the age of 7 -16, and largely teachers are delivering Careers Education. Sometimes they are “picked” for this role within a school for this specialism)

For adults there are Employment Officers acting as 1-1 Careers Advisers (in Unemployment centres)

Advice in Universities is a fairly new area of development.

Norway

Norway was discussed as having a very work-focussed, affluent and competitive society with a high level of employment. From the age of 6-16 children do visits to industry, and will have a careers Adviser on-site. If they have a bigger problem they would be referred to a Psychologist by the Careers staff or their “Social teacher”.

In Further Education the Guidance Practitioner in Norway would also be the Counsellor (on-site) , and the same debate about this issue in Norway as there is in Ireland- e.g. Is this a wise way of allocating roles? There is also an available link to a Psychologist, who may be on or off-site.

If a young person wishes to go onto alternative vocational programmes , or even part-time schooling, this can be arranged via a Careers Adviser, through strong referral systems to other professionals and training providers/programmes.

For Adults there is a very good guidance provision through Job Centres. This guidance uses Careers Action Plans in a way that links directly to an individual's benefit provision or sometimes withdrawal , with some free training available to enable secondary level to be reached and for skills such as IT.

Sweden

In Sweden there is no “entitlement” to Careers Guidance as such but the government has responsibility for this area up till the age of 20. Local Councils decide how much will be spent on this area. In schools there are usually on-site Careers Counsellors and Counsellors from the age of 6-19. Upper Secondary schools have special programmes for those in danger of dropping out - including vocational training. It is expected that the majority will gain University entry level qualifications in school.

For adults the focus is increasing in this area, with a all states having at least one Guidance Centre, and these are increasing. More University Guidance Practitioners are now becoming professionally trained.

Greece

Careers Guidance is provide in Greece from Junior High School level onwards , using trained school teachers (additional training whilst working)

Spain

All "Professional Secondary Schools" have a full-time Guidance Counsellor on-site. The allocation is usually 2 for every 500-1200 students. Each College will have a Guidance Department with, typically, a Careers Counsellor, a Special needs-trained teacher, and a Social guarantee programme teacher (defined as a vocational programmes adviser, for academically disaffected students)

The Guidance workers work on: analysis of problems or issues, skills and interest assessment, and some work with the families of students (though 1-1 Interviews are always confidential between guidance practitioners and the student)

Day Two , Tuesday 8th March and Wednesday 9th March

Work Shadowing with Cathie Hogan, Adult Education Guidance Counsellor, based in the AEGS Office of Crumlin Further Education College, Dublin City South West.

I shadowed alongside Kari from Norway and Agneta from Sweden.

Cathie first gave us all an outline of the area on the outskirts of Dublin that the College serves. It is one of the three areas of highest social deprivation around Dublin, with 27% of students who have not had a family member working, pockets of unemployment at 24% (compared to 4-5% overall in Ireland) The Irish taskforce on social inclusion reported on Crumlin in 1992 and again in 2002 and found no real improvements over this time. Reasons for this have been debated and lack of co-ordination of services and support has been suggested as a reason. Low levels of students reach University in Crumlin, with many not completing secondary school. There is a lot of social housing and a lot of depressing high rise blocks- though these are being replaced.

There has been a sizeable influx of immigrants from, particularly, Nigeria, Romania, Lithuania, and Poland, due to a previous National policy of giving citizenship to those whose children were born in Ireland. There are also many Chinese students who have come to Ireland on student visas.

Cathie feels that since the mid-80's perceived mobility has started to change aspirations in the area, but on the other hand there are still big social problems to deal with, such as the number of single mothers (20% of mothers are single mothers) In terms of requesting help, these clients tend to come in when their children reach school age. Local funded child care is appallingly insufficient, with only 20 funded places locally (via the Unemployment service, FAS)

Another major local problem is low literacy levels, not surprising given that Ireland is 15th in the world literacy tables, and the historic early school leaving culture in Ireland (2 generations ago leaving at age 12-14 was not uncommon,

and only recently has legislation been passed to make school compulsory till age 16)

Local people maintain myths about being discriminated against in terms of consideration for work due to their address in this part of the City. The local minimum wage is 6.5 Euros.

The Guidance advisers use a database of clients and clients are categorised as training ready or employment ready , with regular follow-ups for target setting. The tie-in with the activities of the Job Centres is increasing over time , though they do not share client-confidential information. Crumlin AEG Guidance workers will help with CV's and job search, though the Job Centre (FAS) will do the job search and can also help with courses and possible work experience.

Initiatives:

National / Local initiatives include the following:

The Education Welfare board tracks school leavers in order to follow them up

Civic, Social and Personal Education is bringing more careers education into the curriculum at a younger age in schools

The Stay in School Programme- As part of this Guidance workers can visit and assist within the home

Family learning - Parents are encouraged to attend outreach training when their children are in school

Back to Education Allowance (Nationally funded) This is 31 Euros a week, plus 54 for subsidised childcare locally

Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme - Many subjects, need to be unemployed 6 months, over 21, (can get BTEA) .80 places a year.

Back to Education Initiative (Crumlin College) - Free computer-based training in IT for adults of all ages

Specialist outreach training provision for groups such as older women, arranged with the Adult and Community Education Officers in Colleges- emphasis on transferable skills.

Visit to Open Learning Centre, Crumlin College

Frank Walsh, the Director of the Learning centre is an open and encouraging character who works hard to find and improve practical solutions for the training

needs of the users of the centre.

He has to find funding for and source the computer equipment- sometimes having to be highly tactical in this, and runs the centre. The Learning Centre which includes a library and 2 computer rooms (one room for students and one for public use/ Other Courses) is a new addition to the College.

The innovative side to the Open use area is the way that the spin-off courses are being developed.

The ECDL course - a full -time 6 month course which includes self-development skills has a high take up by young single mothers who left school early. It is the most successful FAS-referred course in the area.

Learners start on the open-learning area as a trial to see if they like this, then move onto a central block of computers to start the self-paced modules. There are learning assistants available for all students in the Open Access area, and a feature of the ECDL is that after 3 months on the course students have a 2 hour a week slot acting as a centre assistant for the public clients (who pay per hour for computer use) Informal job placements can be arranged as can referrals to local Colleges for interviews for paid work. It shows how local networking can really work if all partners keep the needs of the student to the fore.

This course has a rate of 92% of students either moving onto paid work or other training.

Visits to Outreach Adult Literacy Groups in Crumlin

In the afternoon we briefly saw one college-based literacy class, and drove to two literacy groups locally, with learners who had various backgrounds and reasons for learning. Some students had previous drug problems which had interrupted their education, some had just left school early, and some wanted a new start as an adult- e.g. because their children had gone to school and they wanted to help them with their homework and couldn't, or they wanted better work.

In the college-based class each learner has volunteer tutor sat next to them in class- in a class of about 10 students, which I felt was a good example of organising for, and harnessing the goodwill and skills of the local community.

The majority of learners (and the 4 teachers and volunteer learning assistants) were female.

Wednesday 9th March

Meeting with Gretchen Smyth, Careers Adviser Crumlin College

There are 3 Guidance workers in the College- with Kathie and her partner Maura working mostly on an outreach basis (the AEGS Office), and Gretchen Smyth as

the full time term-time only College employed Guidance Adviser who is more tied to the College year in her activities.

Gretchen outlined the student make-up of Crumlin College. The College has 500 students . Though around 660 enrol each year, only half of these actually take the exams. No research has been done yet on why this is. The College doesn't charge fees- only a registration fee. Gretchen supposes that some may not be able to fit studies in with their working times.

Most students have passed their Junior certificate - (with the partial exception of hairdressing and catering) The minimum student age is 17 and 25% of students are over 21. 1 in 10 are non-Nationals, 42-45% go into employment when finishing a course.

With Universities now accepting the 5 FETAC passes at distinction grades (Further Education Training Awards Council Courses at levels 2 and 3) , students now have the chance to enter Higher Education from a College, and Institutes of Technology which are now working more with industry take lower grades than this for Diplomas/ Certificates. Crumlin also offers the AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) course at level three which can link to a degree in the 2nd year.

Gretchen discussed the counselling element of her work. She does do emotional counselling work , and has good supervision and support from a Psychologist who is attached to the College.

The College Year

From March-June tutors interview every student who applies for a course (a 5 minute chat)

They are referred for a Careers Interview if they are unsure or unsuitable.

The Careers Adviser also does outreach work in Schools at this time reassuring potential students that they can study in a College without having lots of "points" or high grades and that they will be seen as a person also.

Gretchen liases closely with tutors on entry requirements and any changes to these are discussed in advance.

From August to September, with the involvement of the College Student Council, there are many Induction meetings held with students of all ages. The needs of disabled students are assessed. Gretchen is working on obtaining more funding for this provision.

In October students will be applying through UCAS for UK University entry. The College has a link to the University of Wolverhampton. If needed Gretchen will refer students to other local College Careers Advisers for help with this.

Meeting with Frances Ward, Adult Literacy Organiser, Crumlin College

With a major OECD report in 1997 concluding that 25% of adults in Ireland had poor literacy skills, this is a major area of emphasis in learning in the Ireland. Frances Ward, began as a “remedial teacher” and has seen the issue gain in importance through her work in Crumlin College.

She sees it as a historical problem, given that secondary education was only free after 1968. Dyslexia is also a common problem among adults, that can remain undiagnosed and hidden, tied up with low literacy skills. The Irish Dyslexia Association is not funded to assist adults, though they offer a paid-for service.

Frances feels that the cycle of low expectations and doing as one’s parents did needs to be broken in order to improve chances for young people and then adults.

Initiatives :

It is not just Organisations in Cities that are tackling this problem. There are many schemes and interventions going on across Ireland.

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a National body which provides very useful and up to date literature, learning resources, specialised training, and promotes new procedures and change within central government and local Councils.

Within the College, one way that is being addressed is the voluntary tutor system that gives 1-1 support for adult learners in classes. These tutors are either retired or may be working. They receive 25 hours tuition (including 4 hours on dyslexia) in supporting the learners, which is funded by the local authorities and classes are led by a fully trained tutor, then the 1-1 groups break into activities.

Standard style small group classes are available in a wide range of settings, both within the College and in community outreach venues.

“Reading with your child” classes are bringing a “family learning” aspect to literacy provision and can be a way to encourage parents - and particularly women, who left school to raise their children.

English can be studied along with Communications and Maths and often includes practical skills such as CV’s and letter writing

FETAC portfolio-based Foundation level courses (equivalent to school leaver level) are also offered in areas such as child development, personal effectiveness, and food and nutrition as well as communication and language skills. These can lead onto level One FETAC and Leaving Certificate in English,

with the possibility of doing other subjects at leaving Cert level elsewhere and eventually reaching University, even if starting off as illiterate. Frances did say several students had got to University this way, which was enormously satisfying for staff.

The literacy students' work was compiled into an inspiring yearly annual, which is distributed locally- with many success stories and very personal triumphs described by the students.

Free ESOL classes are provided at the College, though there is insufficient resource to satisfy the demand in this part of the City.

Frances is trying to build relationships with local employers in terms of their being partners in encouraging and funding literacy and skills training for their staff. Uptake has been slow, however. Unions, the NHS, and the public sector are more amenable to liaise in the area. Frances has also approached the Army recently, with results pending.

We asked about relationships with local Job Centres, given that low literacy is a major contributing factor in the high local unemployment level. This varies widely, as does the level of awareness and training given to Job Centre Staff. As in other countries where services rely on client numbers to assure future funding, in terms of other agencies it can be a "numbers game", which can affect the level of open and accessible advice given to people on training.

Visit to Travellers Womens Group, Ballyfermot Civic Centre

We went to the new and well appointed local government office in one of the most run-down areas of Ballyfermot. This group was a literacy and communications skills group for Traveller women living in the area. As in other visits to classes it was a warm and welcoming atmosphere and the women were happy to talk to us, outlining some of enormous life and social problems they have encountered.

Traveller men have not come forward for these kind of classes. The women cited wanting to support their children in their learning- for instance reading with them, which is one of the emphasis' of the course, and also being able to stand up for their rights through letters and for some making statements in council hearings on accommodation issues.

I felt it was major achievement to have gained the trust of these learners, and establishing this group. The group seemed to feel that have a listening and sympathetic hearing from the tutors they are re-engaging with learning, after perhaps only completing a few years - or none at all- of traditional schooling, and living a very insecure and marginalized life in the community.

Meeting with Higher Education “Student Support Worker” at Ballyfermot Civic Centre

There are 30 Government funded area partnerships in Ireland. In areas of high disadvantage there are student Support Officers as extra staffing to address the extra barriers that may exist there.

The Student Support Officer in the Civic Centre is there to address the low participation levels in Higher Education, and to advise and encourage students to consider Further or Higher education. Working alongside Access Officers who work with teachers in primary and secondary schools, the Support Officer visits classes, supports and advises students 1-1 , and assists them in applying for grants.

In Ireland overall 39% of students go onto Higher Education. In the Ballyfermot area this figure is currently 2.4%

The Officer is involved with the “transition Programme” in schools (the optional year at age 15-16 which is a time of forming and considering future decision and skills building and/or taster courses) She feel that there is a need to catch students early, and stop them leaving school early if possible, by outlining all the possibilities and making them more real to the students through information and awareness-building. The figures have shown that 80% of those students that finish secondary school go onto some kind of higher or further learning.

She often uses games, school visits to Further Education Colleges and Universities, as well as Vocational and Technology Colleges. The cultural emphasis in Ireland has been on “Professions” and the Support Officer does activities to counter this and prompt understanding that other skills and trades are just as valuable in society.

In each school, a questionnaire is used to gauge needs and issues, and a 6 week programme carried out, ending with a report for the Careers Guidance staff in schools who are often teachers.

There is also a Query Clinic in the Civic Centre

The Transition Year is a new element in the Irish School System and the results from the work done by the Support worker and colleagues are being tracked by an external research company - using criteria such as entry levels to University, and use of services. So far it appears that it is successful.

The Support Officer has a database and must account for all of her time

Thursday 10th March

Meeting with Lorna Hannify at FAS Training and Employment Authority, Dublin

As the National Employment service, FAS operates alongside community-based local Employment Services. Its 63 offices provide services to job seekers and employers, and information both on job vacancies and training opportunities.. Its targets are: Long term unemployment, early school-leavers, referrals from the department and social welfare, disability, job changers, and those facing redundancy.

In comparison, local community-based Employment services focus more on: the more intensive targets, longer term services. Long term unemployment, early leavers, disabilities, the travelling communities, and local issues in disadvantaged areas.

The FAS/ local approach is intended to address current issues and also be a preventative system. In 1994 the unemployment rate in Ireland was 15% with 9% long term unemployed. The 2004 figures showed the overall rate was 4.2% with 1.5% long term. This shows that the systematic approach is having an affect nationally

Clients arrive at FAS or local services through self referrals, referrals from the Department of Social welfare (under the National Employment Action Plan - NEAP), though there is a very limited exchange of client information for this purpose.

At FAS clients can be assessed, use self-service facilities and information (including information kiosks in centres, the National call centre, online CV services for vacancies) , and given Careers advice and guidance. The client may be placed on a “pathway” as a next step, including: specific skills training, apprenticeships, work placements, customised community based training (fully funded nationally), employment programmes, and/or “intensive guidance” pathways. Supported employment schemes such as “Community Employment“, disability programmes, job-coaching, grants to employers who take on disabled staff, and links to charities such as mental health can also be brought into action

The aim of National and local employment services is to gain “valued outcomes” - i.e. employment or further training which leads to employment, or better paid work.

All Employment Service Officers working with clients have a full induction into the service, including disability and drugs issues. Consequently they must all obtain the certificate in Advice, Guidance and counselling, and increasingly staff are going on to take the next level Diploma. The model of counselling used is Ali and

Graham's "4-phase model" which is a counselling approach.

Overall figures for FAS in 2004 were:

New referrals 89,000

Of these: NEAP referrals 57,000

No of NEAP referrals interviewed 39,000

Jobs obtained 107,000

New developments include a new tracking system, development of new client services, and integration of IT systems

Talk by Careers Guidance Adviser at Tallaght Institute of Technology

The full time Careers Adviser at Tallaght is the only one employed by the College, which has 2,500 students, (though the provision of one person would still apply for up to 9,000 students)

Her activities are very broad, and include through the year:

May - September: 30 minute Advice and Guidance sessions (1-1); Quick query slots; open days; group work outside the College; free phone advice; admissions and registration activities,

September onwards: 30 minute Advice and Guidance sessions (1-1); Quick query slots; Attendance at Freshers' Fairs - which brings in outside agencies and involves all other student services; Seminars on further studies and careers areas; arranging guest speakers; and delivery of self and opportunity awareness, job search, CV, and Interview technique sessions.

The 2003 National Qualifications Framework or "ladder" gives 8 levels of qualification and the Careers Adviser at Tallaght refers to this in her work, as well as bringing across an employment focus, rooted in "informed decision-making".

Only 2% of the Careers Adviser's work is pre-entry (group work) , and this is done in liaison with the College's Schools Liaison Officer, and the Access and Disability Officer, with the aim of increasing target area entrants- i.e. mature, disabled, and disadvantaged student groups.

Developments: It is now possible to go to one of the 14 Institutes of Technology in Ireland to top up school achievements (through FETAC's) in order to get into University.

Institute of Technology Careers Services are now members of the University Careers Advisers network called the AGCS, and the shared "www.gradireland.com" website, a resource for students and advisers is a very useful tool for all (the UK equivalents being AGCAS and www.prospects.ac.uk)

There are plans for a careers management module to be part of each course

curriculum, with relevant credits.

We also briefly visited the Job Centre “shop floor” and used the job kiosks to search for Ireland wide work and relevant training courses, and looked at the “Adult Directions” software that clients can come and use - a database and questionnaire to guide on suitable careers areas.

Friday 11th March

The participants all met at NGCE to discuss the study visits and the thoughts and conclusions people had on their experiences.

All participants had learnt a lot from their experiences.

Some interesting observations came out regarding the local Secondary schools system by the French and Spanish participants- e.g. the good level of respect shown to teachers and authority figures (in comparison to France) , the fact that teachers spend extra time off-timetable to assist students pastorally, the use of mentors for new students, and the way that the new “Transition year” at age15-16 appears to be giving students time to think and develop themselves.

Having a full-time Careers Guidance Counsellor on-site in a Secondary School was seen to be a good thing. These workers had good support from the NGCE and government, even though there was not really enough staff provision for the numbers of students, which was a universal problem across Europe.

The visitors to Secondary Schools also found that there is a lack of child psychologists in the Dublin area- with the resulting long appointment waiting list being a bad problem. Poverty showed itself in terms of some students having to wear hand-me-down uniforms from siblings, but it is generally thought by both parents and teachers to be a good levelling tool (the wearing of uniforms in secondary schools in poorer areas) - and most schools voted for a uniform.

In the Community Education area- with visits made by the Norwegian and Greek participants , an Inner City training Partnership, a youth accommodation / training initiative, and an ex-heroin addict training initiative showed a range of successful targeted interventions, which were making a real difference to people’s lives.

The individuals working in the advice and co-ordination roles of these activities were seen to be warm, community minded, and very connected to their client’s needs as a start point for what they do and their new ideas for change. They used local and national networks to address real problems, and there appeared to be a lack of communication “walls” or professional protection of work areas.